



G R E S H A M
S M I T H A N D
P A R T N E R S

SR 136 Safety Project Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting #1

March 16, 2010

MEETING NOTES

P.I. NO.: 0008314
CSSFT-0008-00(314)
GS&P Project No. 26340.09

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 24, 2010
MEETING TIME: 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
MEETING LOCATION: PICKENS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

PARTICIPANTS:

Community Work Group

Mimi Jo Butler, Marble Valley Historical Society
Tammy Bell, Marble Valley Historical Society
Linda Geiger, GA Chapter Trail of Tears
Honorable Rodney Gibson, Blaine Masonic Lodge
Buddy Callahan, Business Owner
Wendell Aenchbacher, Property Owner
Edsel Dean, Property Owner

Staff Work Group

Chetna Dixon, FHWA – Georgia Division
Joey Low, Pickens County Land Development
Kevin McAuliff, Northwest Georgia Regional
Norman Pope, Pickens County
Greg Callus, Pickens County Public Works Director
Commissioner Robert Jones, Pickens County

Project Team

Kent Black, Gresham, Smith and Partners
Jody Braswell, Gresham, Smith and Partners
Scott Shelton, Gresham, Smith and Partners
Ronda Coyle, Gresham, Smith and Partners
Derrick Cameron, GDOT Traffic Operations (PM)
Michael Nash, GDOT Traffic Operations
Wes King, GDOT District Six
Jill Brown, Edwards-Pitman Environmental
Lisa Crawford, Edwards-Pitman Environmental
Garrett Silliman, Edwards-Pitman Environmental
David Adair, Edwards-Pitman Environmental

DISCUSSION: CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) #1

A. Introductions

Kent Black opened the meeting and asked the meeting participants to introduce themselves. Kent then briefly reviewed the meeting agenda, the CAC notebook, and the expectations for the committee.

B. Organization and Purpose

Kent Black provided a general overview of the project team. Kent discussed the roles and responsibilities document contained in the CAC members' notebooks and noted the role of the CAC committee was to gather and share information on critical issues, assist in development of alternatives, and support the project team. Kent shared the commitment and pledge for the CAC: build consensus, respect and constructive input. Kent asked the CAC members to review the commitment and pledge provided in each notebook and requested the CAC sign the document.

C. Project Development

The project development process includes a historical and roadway story. These stories, plus crash data, traffic data, geometrics and environmental data will assist the CAC to develop a recommendation for the corridor.

D. Environmental Resources

Jill Brown with Edwards-Pitman Environmental (EP) explained how the project will be reviewed for environmental impacts. EP will review the social environment (schools, churches) and the physical environment (air quality, noise). EP is in the process of identifying the potential archeological footprint for the project. SR 136 is believed to be part of the Old Federal Road and the route of the Trail of Tears. Fort Newnan, built as part of the removal of the Cherokee Indians, may be within the project footprint, but may not be part of the impacted area. The cemetery identified on SR 136 is not included in the project footprint and therefore is not being studied. There are several historic homes in the area as well as the Masonic Lodge. However, SHPO has not approved any of the historic resources. To date, no endangered species or protected aquatic species have been identified.

E. Roadway History

In 2002, GDOT recommended a safety improvement project for the corridor and in 2005 a Pickens County study recommended improvements to SR 136. In 2007, GDOT hired GS&P and Edwards-Pitman to begin preliminary evaluations of the corridor. In 2008 the Federal Highway Administration directed GDOT to coordinate with the stake holders on the corridor and develop a Citizens' Advisory Committee.

GDOT's primary goal is the safety of motorists. On SR 136, several safety deficiencies have been identified by GDOT and Pickens County. Contrary to previous perception, only safety improvements are proposed on SR 136 and not widening per a new residential development.

Kent Black highlighted that 46% of all crashes on SR 136 were either injury or fatal and not a collision with another vehicle. Kent Black stated that this corridor has 3.5 times more fatal crashes than the statewide average for similar type roadways and has a crash rate 2.5 times higher than sections just west of the proposed project. During a meeting with Pickens County, the Fire Chief confirmed SR 136 had many crashes over the last eight years. Traffic studies, along SR 136, show traffic volume doubling in the next 20 years potentially meaning more crashes. It was noted that motorists' speed was not a major factor for accidents.

F. Roadway Geometrics

Jody Braswell identified three (3) horizontal curves on the corridor (General Store, Antioch Church Road and Old Ellijay/Hwy. 5 Road) that do not meet current standards. Jody also highlighted four (4) vertical curves with erroneous sight distance on SR 136: SR 136 connector east of SR 136, Antioch Church Road, and two on Priest Circle that need to be improved. Lack of shoulders on SR 136 prevents motorists from correcting over steer movements in horizontal curves. Kent Black interjected that some of the fatalities along SR 136 could be attributed to the vertical curves.

G. Facilitated Discussion

Kent Black stated he would like the CAC members to utilize the black and white aerial layout of the corridor to identify additional accidents and concerns not shown.

Buddy Callahan noted that a fatality (Ms. Moon) was not captured on the layout in front of his business.

Joey Low noted he was surprised about the accidents in the middle of the corridor and thought more accidents occurred at the end of SR 136 at Hwy. 515.

Wendell Aenchbacher noted there had been three fatalities in front of his property (Corey Dean, Ms. Mulkey, Bartow County man) and theorized that the fatalities occurred due to speed or driver unfamiliarity with the area. Mr. Aenchbacher noted the supply trucks are very familiar with the area and know when to slow their vehicles down.

Kent Black stated GS&P investigated accidents over the last ten (10) years, but would research the additional names given to make sure all accidents are recorded.

Buddy Callahan surmised that all the crashes in front of his business were due to driver error except for Ms. Mulkey.

Kent Black stated that the accidents shown were the end point of the accident. The accident may have begun in one area but ended several hundred feet away.

Linda Geiger inquired if any of the crashes were speed or alcohol related. Based on the accident reports, neither alcohol nor high rates of speed were major indicators for the crashes. The major contributors of accidents were over corrections, flipping of vehicle, losing control, and hitting an object (tree, etc.).

Joey Low inquired if any of the accidents might be attributed to local or regional motorists. Kent Black noted GS&P was unsure and would research further. Kent Black stated that regional motorists would certainly have different familiarity with SR 136 than local residents.

The CAC noted that police enforcement is not adequate enough to slow motorists and speed often contributed to accidents along the corridor.

The CAC believes there is a lack of signage along SR 136 and signage needs to be a higher quality and more prominent. The CAC noted that regional motorists traveling to Carters Lake often find themselves in Talking Rock due to the inadequacy of the signage exiting SR 515.

The CAC inquired if GS&P would be discussing any alignment options today. Kent Black stated alignments would be discussed at the May CAC meeting and committee members will have the opportunity to give input on the potential alternatives.

The CAC expressed concern that parts of the original Federal Road are still visible and did not want those areas destroyed by the project. EP is in the process of identifying the Federal Road remnants that would need to be maintained and protected.

The CAC inquired if assistance was needed in locating archeological resources. To identify the archeological resources, EP had to sign a liability release form with GDOT and GDOT would require the same documentation for other individuals to identify archeological resources. EP recommended not adding additional staff to identify the archeological resources.

The CAC noted that they believe the cemetery extends beyond the fenced area. EP noted that the project may not come in contact with the cemetery, but the outlying area might be mentioned in the environmental findings.

MEETING NOTES

P.I. NO.: 0008314

CSSFT-0008-00(314)

GS&P Project No. 26340.09

March 16, 2010

Page 5

However, the cemetery will not be researched since it is not in GDOT's scope.

The committee stated that a study had been completed at Talking Rock Creek (west of SR 515) and identified endangered mussels in the area. EP will be completing aquatic surveys in the spring and summer to determine if endangered species exist along the corridor. The committee noted there was a water study completed recently or soon to be completed by Brown and Caldwell and EP may want to contact them to include their findings. Jill inquired if the study completed was in regards to water quality or species. The committee responded that the study was for both.

A CAC participant noted two potentially historical residences, but the committee was unsure of their age.

H. Project Process/Criteria

GS&P has held several stakeholder meetings prior to the CAC meeting to better understand and identify resources along the corridor and explain the project. At the 2nd CAC meeting in May, alternatives will be discussed. At the 3rd CAC meeting a preferred alternative will be presented and if selected by GDOT, the preferred alternative will be shown at the Public Information Open House (PIOH). The PIOH will be for the general public to review the preferred alternative and provide comments. As CAC members, GDOT would request the CAC be ambassadors to describe the CAC process and the project to the public. After approval of the environmental document, a Public Hearing Open House (PHOH) will be held similar to the PIOH.

I. Project Objectives

The project's primary objective for the corridor is to reduce the number of crashes by improving the horizontal curves, vertical curves, sight distance, shoulders and intersection configurations along SR 136. Any roadway improvements would follow the American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guidelines for road design. Per AASHTO the minimum radius for a horizontal curve is 1,060 feet and the minimum vertical sight distance is 500 feet. Currently, the horizontal radii along SR 136 are: 967 feet at SR 136 connector, 954 feet at Antioch Church Road and 578 feet at Elijah Road. Vertical curves would need to be flattened as the driver's height and distance on the curves does not meet AASHTO standards.

J. Environmental Requirements

For this project, EP would be bound by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act. Additional findings along the project might require the following to be obeyed:

- Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act
- Environmental Justice

MEETING NOTES

P.I. NO.: 0008314

CSSFT-0008-00(314)

GS&P Project No. 26340.09

March 16, 2010

Page 6

- Abandoned Cemeteries and Burial Grounds
- Farmland Protection Act
- Endangered Species Act
- Clean Water Act
- Others

K. Tentative Schedule

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| • CAC #2 | May 26, 2010 |
| • CAC #3 | Fall 2010 |
| • PIOH | Winter 2010 |
| • PHOH | Fall 2011 |
| • Environmental Approval | Winter 2011 |
| • Construction | 2014 |

The project schedule length allows adequate time to evaluate the environment and to ensure the environment is protected prior to construction.

L. Closing

GS&P requested the CAC members review the information in their notebooks and to contact GS&P, EP or GDOT with any questions or concerns. In addition, a CAC member contact list is provided so that members may coordinate amongst themselves. For the next CAC meeting, the project team will review the information from today and begin developing alternatives to present to the CAC for review and comment.

The committee inquired if there was funding available for the project and GDOT replied that safety money had been allocated for the project.

This represents our understanding of the items discussed at CAC Meeting #1 on February 24, 2010. If you have any questions or comments concerning any of the information contained here, please contact Scott Shelton.

Prepared by: Ronda J. Coyle

RJC